



State of Connecticut

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Testimony in Support of HB 6157- AN ACT CONCERNING PERSONALLY IDENTIFYING INFORMATION ON CERTIFICATIONS OF MARRIAGE AND DEATH

Public Health Committee

February 27, 2013

My thanks to the Honorable Co-Chairs Senator Terry Gerratana and Representative Susan Johnson, Vice Chairs Senator Gayle Slossberg and Representative Philip Miller, Ranking Members Senator Jason Welch and Representative Prasad Srinivasan, as well as the entire Public Health Committee for their time and consideration today, addressing this important issue of personal and family privacy.

In a moment, I will turn my chair over to Newtown Town Clerk, Debbie Aurelia, for her important testimony on this bill, which is the most comprehensive of three that were introduced in the aftermath of the December 14, 2012 tragedy that befell my home town of Newtown. Not only does this bill seek to provide privacy protection to families following the death of a child, it further seeks to amend the general statutes to limit disclosure of selected "personally identifying information" now contained in Certifications of Marriage and Death, when requested by individuals other than parties to the marriage or, in the case of a certification of death, family members, funeral home making arrangements, physicians of deceased persons and public health and administration officials.

I want to note prominently that this bill does not seek to eliminate disclosure of such records, only limit the disclosure of the personally identifying information contained therein. Such is the current protocol for release of birth records, where full-detail, long-form release is limited to members of the family.

These common sense changes are widely supported by the people of Newtown and its legislative delegation; Sen. John McKinney, Representatives Dan Carter, DebraLee Hovey and I, as well as Newtown's First Selectman. You will hear testimony from Town Clerk, Debbie Aurelia, her associates and the CT Association of Town Clerks. You will read compelling written testimony of many others.

I urge the members of the Public Health Committee to support HB 6157 and, in honor of Newtown, advance this bill to protect vital private information.

Thank you for your time and should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact my office.